



etc
magazine

City College of San Francisco | Spring 2017

CANNABIS CURRICULUM

LEGALIZED EDUCATION
AT CITY COLLEGE

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etc magazine

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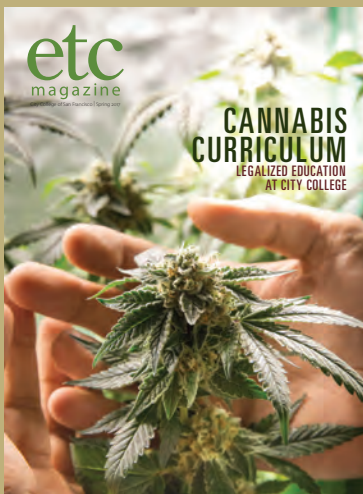
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Photo by Sean Karlin/Etc Magazine.

Horticulture technician and Iraq War veteran Oscar Burrola Jr. nurtures a seven-week-old marijuana flower at Oaksterdam University in Oakland, California.

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About Etc Magazine:

Etc Magazine is an award-winning student publication. It is written, edited, photographed, illustrated, designed, produced and distributed by students enrolled in the Journalism program at City College of San Francisco.

The magazine is devoted to fair and objective reporting. We cover the important issues facing the college, its students, faculty, staff, administration, and the surrounding community. Any opinions expressed in the publication represent the views of the students who authored them. Etc does not purport to represent the views of the school's administration. The magazine comes out twice a year — once in the spring and again in the fall.

Editor's Letter

"The FAKE NEWS media... is not my enemy, it is the enemy of the American People, SICK!"

— Donald Trump via Twitter

The Editor's Letter is the opportunity for the magazine staff to contextualize the issue and give the readers a sense of why we chose the stories we did. As we started working on the Spring 2017 edition of Etc, it seemed all the oxygen had been sucked out of the room by the political earthquake that ushered Donald Trump into the presidency.

On one hand everybody had an opinion about the new administration — ranging from anger to disbelief to apathy (admittedly, there were no fans). On the other hand the general feeling of shock had all but paralyzed the new staff. It took us a moment to shake it off and get to work.

I feel the story choices we made avoided tackling the elephant in the room head-on. Consider the fact that, as an institution, City College is diametrically opposed to everything the Trump administration symbolizes. We are an affordable public school with a culturally diverse student population that embraces all sexual orientations and gender identities, run by the sanctuary city of San Francisco in the blue state of California.

While none of our stories take on Trump directly, the very nature of journalism is to search for the truth. And as we have seen, it is often the truth that draws opposition from this administration. In this issue, the material we chose to write about takes on new layers of meaning in the current political light.

Elizabeth Santos wrote the story **"A Higher Education"** (page 8) about a new course of marijuana studies at City College. The program, scheduled for spring 2018, is sure to make Attorney General Jeff Sessions so mad he could just spit.

Tony Taylor wrote a moving profile-in-courage about City College alumna Cecilia Chung, who transformed from a gender-confused drug addict, hustling on the streets in the Tenderloin, into a strong female activist fighting for transgender rights in **"Seeking Cecilia"** (page 12).

"The Unbearable Lightness of Chi" (page 16), written and photographed by Eric Nomburg, is about alternative physical therapy techniques, specifically tai chi, to help people suffering from cerebral palsy and other physical disabilities regain control of their bodies.

Looking at the economy we have an in-depth exposé from former culinary student Victor Tence, **"Eating — Out"** (page 3), about the declining student enrollment in what was once a flagship culinary program at City College.

Kathryn Hassler followed City College student Sean Rynhard to his not-quite-a-day job spinning beats for San Francisco's dance scene in **"The Gig Life"** (page 23).

And **"Walking Graham"** (page 28), a parting stroll down memory lane with retiring journalism instructor and Etc Magazine mentor Tom Graham, was written by yours truly. This is the first issue of the magazine since Tom left the department and his guiding influence is missed.

While we had a small staff, we also had a dedicated instructor in Jessica Lifland. A huge thanks to her for seeing us through it all. She was always ready with a needed hug or a whip cracking. Also thanks to Tim Redmond for helping our writers get these stories over the finish line. I pass the torch...

Excelsior!

Sean Karlin, Editor in Chief



Student Molly Kelly carries a basin of potatoes in an empty prep kitchen that was once bustling with students as recently as a few semesters ago. The student-staffed kitchen serves City College's Ocean Campus cafeteria. Once upon a time about a dozen students would be at work here preparing a meal.

EATING — OUT

*The cupboard
is full but the
classroom
is bare*

**Story by Victor Tence
Photos by Kathryn Hassler**

The culinary arts program at City College of San Francisco gets out of bed before all the others. Students in uniform white coats and checkered pants file into the kitchen amid yawns and bleary smiles. It is 6:00 a.m. on a cold and dark morning. Conversations are hushed and whispered across tables and coffee.

A symphony gathers volume as the ovens are lit and one by one their convection fans hum to life. The kitchen begins moving faster. The din and clatter of pans and pots add themselves to a cacophony of cries.

"Behind you!"

"Corner!"

"Coming through!"

This is the sound and fury that goes into learning the craft of cooking for and feeding

the largest of the 11 City College campuses, Ocean Campus.

That was five years ago.

Today the kitchen sounds more like a library. The clank of metal on metal is now a jarring solitary note. Gone is the orchestra of movement and with it much of the vibrancy.

This semester chef Ronald Ng, an instructor with the program, only has nine students, less than half of the 20 or so he averaged in the past.

"This is the smallest class I've taught in my 25 years here," Ng says.

Each class is responsible for prepping, cooking and serving breakfast, lunch or dinner. This includes the time to break down and sanitize each work station before filing into classrooms for lecture.

Overall, department enrollment has slumped.

This semester only 37 new students joined the program, a significant drop from the 80 to 90 students in previous years. This has forced Ng to pare down the menu to accommodate fewer hands. However, they must still open on time at 8:00 a.m.

The students are learning real world lessons.

“How can I look students in the eye and tell them to stick it out when I know they can’t afford to live here?”

—Vince Paratore

“When one person is absent or stops coming back, we have to absorb their station and double up our work,” says Arvin Echane, a first semester student in the program.

“It’s been stressful,” says Vince Paratore, the program’s management instructor. “When you are working with such a lean crew, absences cripple you. It just makes it hard on everybody when students can’t make it for one reason or another.”

Second semester student Laura Oikawa, 25, recalls a morning class with chef Mark Hodgson. “The worst thing that ever happened was when only two people showed up. We normally have seven.”

Both students ran stations that typically require three sets of hands. Hodgson was also forced to run a station to offset the production load.

“My students come exhausted. I can see it. Then we ask them to work harder. It isn’t right and it isn’t fair,” says Paratore.

Considering the nature of the industry and the cost of living in the city, many stu-

dents have to manage the program’s full load — which can average 30 hours a week in the kitchen and classrooms — while working a second, paying job in order to afford rent.

It’s not an easy balancing act, and for many, it’s not worth the effort.

San Francisco has become too expensive for many entry-level kitchen workers and it doesn’t get much better at the top, either.

The 2016 Bureau of Labor Statistics report showed that a head chef’s salary averages \$45,920 a year, \$2,000 less than the national average income for all trades.

“You can’t move to San Francisco as an interested cook and find [an affordable] place to live. It’s very, very difficult,” says Laurence Jossel, head chef and owner of Nopa, a popular San Francisco eatery on Divisadero Street.

Traditionally, cooks would seek out a city like San Francisco to train under experienced chefs. Today, however, smaller towns where startup costs are cheaper are successfully attracting talent away from the established food meccas.

“Learning about food — and cooking specifically — has become much more accessible in smaller places, in less intense segments of the country, for example Atlanta, Dallas, in the middle of Ohio,” says Jossel. “You don’t have to make the trip out [to San Francisco] anymore.”

The exodus of cooks from the city has kept pace with the increase in rent.

Many kitchens now struggle to maintain a fully staffed back of house. This is reflected in the culinary program’s job board, which is currently advertising 74 full-time kitchen positions in and around the city.

Few pay more than \$14 an hour.

The average wage of a line cook has only increased one-eighth the amount of a server’s in the last 30 years, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

California has a specific labor law which requires hospitality workers to have “direct guest interaction” in order to be a part of the tip pool.

“We have a lot of cooks who want to stay in the [restaurant] business... and move to front of house to get those tips. A simple solution to that is to share those tips, but here we can’t,” says Jossel.

With high demand and low supply, traditional economics dictates that kitchen labor should see a raise in their wages. So if restaurants can’t give cooks access to tips, why isn’t management moving more money to the back of the house?

Because the money simply isn’t there.

“We fought tooth and nail to keep our prices low, but they had to creep up. The cost of doing business has had to creep up. Our \$20 pork chop 11 years ago is now \$32, and we need every cent to survive,” says Jossel.

The base cost of food has gone up; however, Jossel attributes the majority of the increase to labor, along with local and federally mandated health care costs.

Any business that employs 50 or more staff must provide health insurance or face a financial penalty.



Andrea Crnic, center, prepares corned beef in the prep kitchen of the Ocean Campus cafeteria while Rosalind Barrios, left, and Barry Duong, right, observe.



A student, left, orders lunch at the counter of the student-run school cafeteria at City College's Ocean campus. The culinary students have had to learn to do more with less as culinary department enrollment has dipped, due to a multitude of factors.

Jossel says that for Nopa this mandate has cost more than \$100,000 in lost profit.

The margins for the traditional sit-down service restaurant are razor thin and on the way out.

“With the way that insurance has just skyrocketed, and a high minimum wage, and the amount of bodies it takes to start things from scratch, we have to think of a different model,” says Jossel. “Even places like Nopa are the future dinosaurs. They will start to fade away.”

Ten years ago, landing a culinary job required a willingness to work long days, sometimes having to bear verbal abuse and often working many unpaid hours. Cooks were seen as disposable to management who ran with a burn and turn policy: If one cook left, five hopefuls were ready to take their place.

The growing labor shortage in San Francisco has significantly changed this power dynamic.

Today, the National Restaurant Association's annual industry report states the “labor pool is getting shallower, and recruitment and retention of employees will re-emerge as a top challenge.”

Roxanne Rufenacht, the executive sous-chef at the Burlingame Country Club — and an alumna of City College's Culinary Program — can barely contain herself regarding hiring difficulties. “Nowadays we can't pick and choose anymore. We are so desperate for labor that we bring anyone in.”

Bringing anyone in or “getting a body on the line” doesn't quite solve the labor issues. Rather, it raises new ones.

Kitchens desperate for labor are often shackled to employees that provide subpar work and a “shit attitude,” according to Rufenacht.

“They get lazy. They aren't motivated. You can't put will and passion into their skill set,” says Rufenacht.

Enrollment in the program took a major hit during the 2013 accreditation crisis that

threatened to shut down the school. Student enrollment as a whole is recovering; however, enrollment in the culinary program remains low, which correlates to the back-of-house labor shortage in the city.

Students and new cooks are finding a lower barrier to entry into professional kitchens than in the past, so they are skipping out on school and going directly to work.

“[The culinary arts program] was treated like a job, which in one sense is good; it's like a real-life experience. But getting a job in this industry isn't that hard, so if you want that real-life experience, you can just go get it,” says Oikawa.

Paratore points out that in a city with such high living costs, many students would rather earn an hourly wage than learn.

“They have to make a choice now: their education or their rent,” says Paratore.

“How can I look students in the eye and tell them to stick it out when I know they can't afford to live here?”

Even the passing of Proposition W, which will make tuition at City College free for San Francisco residents, doesn't give some faculty members much hope.

"For our program the jury is still out about [Proposition W]. Restaurants are having problems getting cooks so they take people with no experience," says Ng.

The downturn in enrollment has jeopardized many aspects of the culinary program. The Chef's Table restaurant, a City College showpiece where students cook and serve food in a fine-dining setting, has reduced its number of tables and server positions to cope with a 60 percent reduction in class size.

For years, the Ocean Campus cafeteria had been open for breakfast and lunch Monday through Friday, and dinner Monday through Thursday. Due to low enrollment, the cafeteria now closes on Fridays and has cut the Monday dinner service.

Dinner specials, which were created by students and ran alongside the main entrées, are no longer possible.

Before the downturn, the program had installed a new brick pizza oven, making City College one of only two schools in the state to have one.

However, the Quick Service facility, which houses the new oven and once served an additional 60 to 80 students a day, has been closed since spring semester 2016, once again due to low enrollment. Paratore estimates that the facility would need about six more students to run the oven for lunch throughout the week.

Despite these setbacks, the City College culinary program is still setting itself apart from competitors by offering a comprehensive curriculum at a fraction of the cost of a traditional vocational school.

Paratore recognizes the challenges students face, but his belief in the program remains firm. "If you can find a way to make it work, this is still the best place for you," he says.

"That program should be packed with students," adds Jossel.

Industry leaders such as Jossel praise the program for its pragmatic and transparent approach. Jossel appreciates how frank the instructors are with the students about the reality and challenges of kitchen life.



Students, from left to right, Bonnie Nguyen, Thaung Hein and Rafael Hernandez practice pastry writing on plastic cafeteria trays in an empty prep kitchen at the Ocean Campus cafeteria.

"It's not an easy program. You have to pour [yourself] into it, and it gives you a snapshot of life and the great people there, including Mark [Hodgson], Tannis [Reinhertz] and Barbara [Haimes]," says Jossel about the program's instructors.

"They are good people. They were tops in our industry and they've got a lot of wisdom to share," he says.

Nopa has a long history of bringing in City College graduates, many of whom have stayed to work with Jossel for many years. "They come in with knowledge. They come in with discipline. They've had two years to figure it out. They know what they want. That's pretty fantastic."

Despite the fact that City College is losing students to the industry, its reputation still



pulls in a few who have come to the program after working in professional kitchens.

Joel Martinez, 36, from the Dominican Republic, is a first semester student with over 12 years of cooking experience under his apron. He was drawn to San Francisco for the density and diversity of food culture and he saw City College as a way to round out his professional training.

He is a passionate exception to the trend.

“This school prepares you for work, for battle, for the fire. You cook everything here,” says Martinez.

The enrollment numbers suggest that far more people agree with Oikawa, who has no intention of finishing the program past the second semester because she wants to go straight to work.

“I don’t think having a degree is necessary,” says Oikawa. “I think the school does a good job of helping you make connections. If you needed a degree to get a job in this industry I would stick it out, but you don’t. Maybe I’m wrong. I guess we’ll find out.”

The future of hospitality in San Francisco remains uncertain, and with it, the City College culinary arts program. ♦

A HIGHER EDUCATION

Collaborating on a new curriculum for a sticky subject

Story by Elizabeth Santos



Marijuana buds sit under a grow light at Oaksterdam University. (Elizabeth Santos/Etc Magazine)

A distinct, skunky odor permeates the classroom. Several marijuana plants in various phases of growth sit underneath bright LED grow lights within two industrial-looking machines called grow boxes, which keep the temperature steady at 79.9 degrees Fahrenheit. Pictures of previous graduating classes cover the classroom walls.

Students squeeze in along four horizontal tables and fill up the classroom. Robert Raich's voice rises above the loud hum of the machines to explain the pros and cons of various business structures in his Cannabusiness 102 class.

Raich is a lawyer who advocated in favor of marijuana in two cases before the Supreme Court. Now he is an instructor too.

"As a businessperson, you get to pay taxes. Congratulations!" Raich says emphatically to the students.

No, this is not City College of San Francisco. Not yet. This is Oaksterdam University, the first cannabis trade school in the U.S. It offers horticulture, business and legal classes to educate budding marijuana entrepreneurs.

But a similar class could be taking place on a City College campus very soon.

City College aspires to be the first community college in California with a formal program in the business of cannabis.

This new curriculum direction comes after more than 6.5 million voters passed Proposition 64 in the November 2016 election, legalizing the recreational use of marijuana. The Proposition won 74 percent of the San Francisco vote.

Effective Jan. 1, 2018, this measure will allow Californians who are 21 and older to possess and use cannabis. It also permits retail sales of marijuana and adds a tax of 15 percent.

Until then there is still a bit of haze surrounding marijuana-related activity in San Francisco. Recently, the city's Department of Public Health issued a Proposition 64 fact sheet seeking to clarify the new rules. The bottom right corner of the fact sheet reads, "California is figuring it out."

Now City College is figuring it out... with some help from Oaksterdam University.

"This is an exciting prospect," says Dale Sky Jones, the executive chancellor at Oaksterdam. "Our relationship [with City College] is still preliminary. [In March] we finally sat down with four representatives from City College — and a couple of union representatives."

Jones was referring to the United Food and Commercial Workers International Union (UFCW). It represents workers in grocery stores, food packing companies, distilleries — and now the cannabis industry. UFCW members in the industry work predominantly in medical dispensaries, coffee shops, bakeries, patient identification centers, hydroponics stores, and growing and training facilities.

The UFCW initiative to unionize the pot industry grew out of a six-year conversation with various existing unions and their representatives to create a realistic model for a cannabis worker apprenticeship program.

"The relationship that is moving forward is the one with the UFCW and City College," Jones says. "We're at the stage right now of trying to identify the curriculum."

At this point nobody knows what actual classes would look like at City College. No formal agreement has been made between the two schools and the union.

What we do know is this: tentative plans call for the curriculum to be rolled out in two phases.

The first phase would be a work-study program in collaboration with City College, Oaksterdam and the UFCW. Students would concurrently receive in-class education and participate in a union apprenticeship.

Presumably UFCW would lead the job training portion while City College would set the local education standard. Students who complete this program would receive a certificate from City College.

The second phase would incorporate the curriculum into City College's pharmacy technician program.

"If you go to Walgreens, the person behind the counter is a pharm tech," says City College spokesperson Jeff Hamilton.

"They've been trained and qualified to handle people's prescriptions. The cannabis model would be similar. [Students] would be trained in medical uses and assist customers with their prescriptions."

City College intends to make this into a degree program, but has no concrete plans at the moment.

Classes could start as early as the spring of 2018.

City College and Oaksterdam are working on defining program completion requirements. Such a standard does not yet exist in



Top: Robert Raich, lawyer and faculty member at Oaksterdam University, lectures students in his Cannabusiness 102 class. (Elizabeth Santos/Etc Magazine)

Bottom: A smoker comes prepared with jars full of marijuana buds for the annual 4/20 celebration at Golden Gate Park. The energy was particularly high this year because of the passage of Proposition 64. (Kathryn Hassler/Etc Magazine)



Left: A map hangs in an Oaksterdam University classroom. The pins represent students' hometowns. The diverse student body hails from all over California, the U.S. and overseas. (Elizabeth Santos/Etc Magazine) Right: Oaksterdam horticulture technician Oscar Burrola Jr. turns in his homework. (Sean Karlin/Etc Magazine)



the cannabis industry. For example, current Oaksterdam students cannot get college credit for the classes they complete.

City College Trustee Tom Temprano thinks establishing the cannabis curriculum is a budget priority.

"All of our technical programs are a priority," Temprano says. "The idea of cannabis training was something that I received a lot of enthusiasm about." Temprano adds that it makes sense for City College to take a lead on this.

"San Francisco will be the epicenter of this incredible growth and City College will be better prepared than any other institution."

No plans have been submitted to the California community college curriculum committee because there are still so many unanswered questions.

"When Proposition 64 passed, that got us thinking this is going to be a big thing in California," says Hamilton. "How do we develop a program that addresses this? We wanted to make sure we're in front of this issue."

He adds, "We are always on the lookout from a workforce development side... to make sure we're meeting the student needs."

Ideally, when students complete the program they could immediately be placed in

"San Francisco will be the epicenter of this incredible growth and City College will be better prepared than any other institution."

— Tom Temprano



Medicinal marijuana plants sit under grow lights at Oaksterdam University. Notes pertaining to their care stick up from the dirt. The plants are labeled "Medical marijuana, compliance with state law, voter approved, physician recommended." (Elizabeth Santos/Etc Magazine)



A man smokes a large joint to celebrate 4/20 in Golden Gate Park. (Kathryn Hassler/Etc Magazine)

industry jobs that include working at cannabis dispensaries or in manufacturing. Hamilton emphasizes that the new program must create accreditation requirements similar to those that exist for other academic concentrations such as nursing.

For example, nursing technicians have a 2,000-hour requirement of on-the-job training that needs to be fulfilled before they may enter the workforce. Part of City College's recent meeting with Oaksterdam was spent envisioning what an equivalent standard would be in the cannabis industry.

An apprenticeship program has existed between UFCW and cannabis dispensaries since 2014.

"[City College] has been a promoter of this kind of apprenticeship program where both non-union and union members can participate," says Jeff Ferro, director of the UFCW's Cannabis Workers Rising campaign.

Until legalization goes into effect, Mayor Ed Lee has directed a Cannabis State Legalization Task Force to oversee the research and implementation of all related policies. This includes policies regarding

"When Prop 64 passed that got us thinking this is going to be a big thing in California."

— Jeff Hamilton

sales, workforce development, social justice, public health and safety.

One directive from the task force report reads: "San Francisco should develop cannabis workforce and entrepreneurship pathways that reflect social justice principles in all aspects of the industry."

The San Francisco Office of Economic and Workforce Development would explore state funding opportunities to create entrepreneur and labor training programs.

City College's plans for cannabis education seem to be aligning with this directive.

"One of the most important things to me," says Temprano, "is that the people who are able to grow along with [the cannabis industry] are the students that City College really serves. Looking at the barriers to entry for minorities and low income groups, this industry is potentially part of the solution to that. I think this allows [students] to work, study and stay in San Francisco."

University of California, Irvine has recently announced plans to create an interdisciplinary cannabis research institute in the next year. If more public and private schools follow this trend, California can expect a massive new industry to blossom.

This all may go up in smoke if the Trump administration decides to enforce federal laws in states where recreational use has been legalized. Under federal law marijuana remains an illegal substance.

But supporters remain optimistic.

"Cannabis is legal in California," says Temprano. "It's only a matter of time before public institutions like colleges will be part of that de-stigmatization process. It's an important step for the cannabis industry at large."

In fact, it is an industry that could be valued at billions of dollars — and City College is set to play a pivotal role for students and workers eager to take a hit. ♦



SEEKING CECILIA

*From a tumultuous,
gender-confused
past emerges
a national
advocate*

Story by Tony Taylor

Cecilia Chung is a transgender activist recently portrayed in "When We Rise," an ABC miniseries. (Tony Taylor/Etc Magazine)

In the Grand Ballroom of the Westin St. Francis hotel, a formal gala honors and celebrates LGBTQ leadership. Inlaid gold chandeliers hang from the 16-foot ceiling above 50 round, crowded dining tables. Utensils clink on dessert plates and muffled chatter fills the air. It's past 9:00 p.m. and most of the room has grown restless, including Cecilia Chung.

A video clip plays from "When We Rise," an ABC miniseries chronicling LGBTQ struggles and triumphs. George Kalogridis, the president of Walt Disney World Resorts, introduces table 48 to the stage. The real-life activists who are portrayed by actors in the docudrama are awarded Champion of the Year by the Out & Equal Workplace Advocates for their activism throughout the decades.

Diana Jones, Roma Guy and Cecilia, who is sheepishly the last one onto the stage, listen

as fellow LGBTQ activist Ken Jones begins the acceptance speech.

"We're here to accept this award on behalf of the hundreds and hundreds of grassroots activists, some having died from reproductive injustice, suicide, drug overdose... and too, too many from HIV and AIDS," Jones says. "They never could've imagined the life stories of LGBTQ activists on Disney-owned ABC television during primetime!"

Applause erupts in the room.

"I always felt someone would discover my secret even though I couldn't name that secret myself."

— Cecilia Chung

"... We also accept this award on behalf of transgender women," he continues. "Primarily trans women of color who live at the dangerous intersections of transphobia, racism, sexism and criminalization."

The speech is received with a standing ovation as cameras flash on the quartet and, for the moment, Cecilia smiles. Admittedly uncomfortable in the spotlight, she is first to exit the stage.

Cecilia has done groundbreaking work as a human rights defender and a stigma fighter. She is a nationally recognized speaker on HIV/AIDS awareness, and a founder of the annual Trans March that occurs in San Francisco during Pride weekend.

But her life was not always this glamorous. Cecilia was born male in Hong Kong in 1965.

For most of her adolescence, Cecilia knew that her outward appearance did not match who she was inside. While hiding inside of flashy clothes and accessories, she silently grappled with herself. Was she struggling with homosexuality or gender identity?

"I didn't have a name for it growing up," says Cecilia, an Excelsior resident who has lived in San Francisco for over 30 years.

"The only 'trans' people I was exposed to were drag queens and female impersonators," she adds. "So I always had that assumption that if I chose that path I would have to be a drag queen or a female impersonator. That wasn't what I wanted. It was a miserable

time for me because of that."

She tried to hide from everyone.

"I just felt really modest and shy and self-aware that I always felt someone would discover my secret even though I couldn't name that secret myself."

As she reached puberty she was sent to a Catholic high school for boys. There she showed her first inclination toward activism.

"There were about 13 of us who were effeminate and we knew we had to stick

together to avoid being bullied," she says. "That's when I understood what 'strength in numbers' meant. We did everything as a group."

To keep her "out of trouble," at the age of 15 her parents sent her away to live with an aunt. When that did not work out, she transferred to a boarding school in Australia.

"It's just not something that I preferred, having [my aunt] watching me," she says. "Boarding school seemed like a better idea."

Her sexuality awoke during her time at boarding school.

"An older man took me out to lunch, then took me to [a farm]," Cecilia confesses. "We had sex and that was the first time I actually wore my identity as a gay man. I felt really sick to my stomach afterwards. At the same time, I liked it."

It confused her because she knew she was attracted to men, but didn't feel comfortable calling herself gay.

Gender identity is a person's internal, deeply held sense of their gender, as explained by the Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD) organization. For transgender people, their own internal gender identity does not match the sex they were assigned at birth.

Gabriel Haaland, a transgender male who has known Cecilia nearly 25 years, explains that sexuality and gender are different and are not necessarily comparable. "There are



Top: Cecilia in Hong Kong at age 2 in 1967.

Above: Cecilia, before her transition in 1986, steps off a San Francisco cable car.

(Photos courtesy of Cecilia Chung)

some transgender people who don't identify as male or female," he says.

In 1984, when she was barely 19, Cecilia's family emigrated from Hong Kong to Los Angeles. A few months later, she moved to San Francisco and enrolled at City College for prerequisites. She attended Golden Gate University and received a bachelor's degree in international business management.



Cecilia, far right, accepts the Out & Equal Workplace Advocates award alongside fellow LGBTQ activists, from left to right, Ken Jones, Roma Guy and Diana Jones. (Tony Taylor/Etc Magazine)

"I don't know if I actually 'came out' to my family per se," she says. "I would borrow my mom's dresses when I did drag. But to tell my mom that I wanted to live my life as a woman..." Cecilia thoughtfully trails off.

"There were multiple times in my life that I could've easily come out, but because I didn't have the language yet and I didn't have the community to connect with, it became a very lonely journey," she adds.

Things changed once Cecilia told her mother she wanted to live her life as a woman.

"My parents weren't very receptive because they weren't sure whether this was part of too much stress or a moment of confusion or I was crazy," she says.

Cecilia overcompensated for her confused identity by wearing flamboyant clothes. "I was trapped in a body I didn't know how to appreciate," she says. Fearful someone would discover her secret, she tried hiding from everyone.

"My family didn't have an instruction manual on how to deal with a trans child," she says reflectively. "Back then there was too much tension and misunderstanding."

She recalls, "We fought a lot. Once my dad called the police when he found me with a man in my bed." That's how she ended up on the streets of the Tenderloin.

There were no anti-discrimination laws when Cecilia began fully presenting as a woman in the '90s. Like many transgender

people at the time, she struggled to keep a job. She found work as a court interpreter until a judge noticed she had changed physically.

"The judge asked a coordinator if I should be addressed as mister or missus," she says. "Within six months I got a letter saying they no longer need my services."

Her means of survival became sex work and self-medication. She began using crystal meth heavily. In 1993, Cecilia was diagnosed with HIV.

"I really had to fight to stay alive," she says. "There were no protocols in place on how to engage transgender patients. There was no cure, and seeking competent health care was like a crap shoot."

The drug use escalated after her diagnosis.

"Before, I used drugs recreationally. I thought I'd gotten over some of my other addictions, like crack cocaine, but having HIV and being all by myself was a lot harder to deal with than I had imagined."

She used the drugs to stay awake, to feel less emotional pain and to alleviate her shame.

"I have nothing against sex work," she adds. "If it wasn't 'survival' sex work, I might've still done sex work because the money was lucrative."

The end of her addiction was not pretty. "I was so strung out on meth that I started getting paranoid, hearing voices."

For three years Cecilia struggled to survive. She tried to work in the HIV prevention field, but because of unstable housing and drug use, she became homeless and remained unemployed.

"What motivated me to get clean was a traumatic experience toward the end of my run," Cecilia says. "In 1995 I was sexually assaulted and I got stabbed by two men. The hospital asked who was my emergency contact and I was still listing my mom. That's when [my family and I] started to reconcile."

Without her family's support, Cecilia says she wouldn't have been able to get off crystal meth and out of the Tenderloin.

"Before the attack my family wasn't very close," she says. "They realized that I wasn't doing this for fun and that [my gender identity] wasn't caused by the drugs. Seeing me in the hospital after being stabbed opened my mother's eyes."

Cecilia's mother offered to pay for her gender confirmation surgery in 1998.

"I think she really saw the difference in me living life as my authentic self and so she offered to pay for my surgery to complete my transition in Thailand," Cecilia says.

After the transition, she noticed her desire to wear loud clothes diminished. She no longer needed to overcompensate as she eased into her true identity.

"I think that's what happens when you know you are whole and you don't need accessories to explain who you are as a person," she says.

Now 51, Cecilia works as a senior strategist at the Transgender Law Center in Oakland. It's the largest national organization dedicated to advocating for the rights of transgender and gender-nonconforming people through litigation, policy advocacy and public education.

In 2014 she launched Positively Trans, a project that helps transgender women of color. Through research, policy advocacy, legal advocacy and an emphasis on leadership, Positively Trans seeks to mobilize and promote resilience of transgender people most impacted by or living with HIV/AIDS, particularly transgender women of color.

"People gave me the chance to show my leadership and I wanted to pay it forward," she says.

She is also the first transgender person to serve on the seven-member San Francisco Health Commission. It oversees the city's budget of nearly \$1.6 billion and serves as the policy-making body for the Department of Public Health, San Francisco General Hospital, emergency medical services and other key city functions.

"I worked with the health department to make sure that while providing these gender-reassignment opportunities through private insurance, we also brought up the issues of health equity," she says. "I wanted to make sure those with low income and the uninsured have access to the same medical services. It shouldn't be limited to income or their ability to purchase insurance — this is something we have determined to be medically necessary."

City College Trustee Alex Randolph has known Cecilia for 11 years. Randolph, who



Cecilia works at her desk at the Transgender Law Center in downtown Oakland. (Tony Taylor/Etc Magazine)

"My family didn't have an instruction manual on how to deal with a trans child."

— Cecilia Chung

is biracial and openly gay, says Cecilia serves as an inspiration to all, and exemplifies what it means to work on LGBTQ issues.

"It's up to us and people like Cecilia to use our platform to make sure other people have the same access," Randolph says.

"[Many] transgender people still lack adequate access to employment opportunities, are homeless and are struggling for basic survival."

He adds, "We still have trans women and men being murdered and beaten up in San Francisco."

Progress has been slow.

According to The Advocate magazine, in the first few months of this year at least nine transgender women of color have been murdered. Transgender and gender-nonconforming young people, particularly youth of color, fall victim to poverty, homelessness and profiling by law enforcement. Often they are pushed into the school-to-prison pipeline.

"[In 2016], 27 trans people were murdered in the U.S." Cecilia says.

The Advocate suggests that the actual number is likely higher, given that some are misgendered by police and some murders

are not reported to the media at all.

"Twenty-seven might not be a big number to another community, but consider how small the trans community is," Cecilia adds. "It just speaks to the anti-trans violence and, to a certain extent, the cruelty of not seeing trans people as human. There is a sense that they're not taking the life of a human being. It's like they're abusing an animal."

Randolph says, "[We need to use] our influence as leaders and our ability to provide protection and help."

He adds that it's exciting to have Cecilia as a City College alumna we can point to. "It's hard to see your future if you don't have an example of how to get there. Cecilia is a great role model of success."

In light of the ongoing threat of violence, Cecilia wants the transgender community to take heart from the growing number of LGBTQ judges, lawyers, doctors and elected officials.

"The majority of people are quite open to meeting transgender people and engaging the trans community," she says. "It's about focusing on the friends and families that we do have. When we are in a moment of despair, [we must] remind ourselves that this too shall pass." ♦



the unbearable lightness



of chi

Martial arts helps differently
abled child rise to her abilities

Photographs and story by Eric Nomburg

Caliah Rounds has a lot of energy today. Her balance is better than usual and her movements are almost fluid. She smiles as Holly Pope, her tai chi teacher, helps her into a correct position.

Sometimes just standing still on the hardwood floor can be a real challenge for 11-year-old Caliah, who has cerebral palsy.

Pope stands motionlessly and mindfully raises up her arms to a static posture. She invites Caliah to do the same.

“Do you want to do the 21 form?” Pope asks Caliah.

Caliah ignores her and starts a free-form dance up and down the studio, but eventually stands next to Pope. She looks at herself in the mirror, then settles into the tai chi meditative standing posture and relaxes.

Caliah begins a series of careful movements alongside Pope with precision and grace.

African-American, her hair in long braids adorned with an assortment of beads and pins, Caliah was in Pope’s first class. She

often wears a colorful scarf and a big smile. She is cheerful and energetic.

But Caliah is nonverbal. Her right side is spastic and she sometimes drools. She was diagnosed with cerebral palsy at birth.

Caliah faces a constant battle for her coordination, strength and balance. The fact that she can practice martial arts is a real victory, and a testament to Pope, who believes that tai chi can be a motivating therapy for people often stuck in wheelchairs and get little more than token exercise.

Pope is lean, athletic and flexible with kind eyes and a beaming smile. Originally from Vesoul in eastern France, she studied literature, art history and chemistry, but something kept steering her away from academia and toward physical activities.

She was one of those kids whose foot was always tapping. She couldn’t sit still in class. She wanted to be in the water. She began surfing, which took her around the world and landed her in Los Angeles.

There she met her husband Bernard Langan... in a dream.

Langan is an internal martial artist based in Oakland. Internal martial arts like tai chi and bagua are fighting systems that cultivate inner stillness and relaxation, whereas external martial arts like karate and taekwondo focus more on body conditioning.

Pope dreamt of the word “bagua.” She didn’t know what it meant. At a friend’s suggestion she Googled it and Langan’s studio appeared at the top of her search.

She found that bagua developed from Taoist meditation. It emphasizes spiral movements such as circle walking, which is just what it sounds like — walking in a circle.

A bagua practitioner starts by extending both arms forward, palms open. Their face and upper torso twist toward the center of the circle while their feet point straight ahead, tracing its circumference.

It can be used both for meditation and for combat.



Previous: Reflected in the mirror, Holly Pope, left, and Caliah Rounds, right, walk toward Caliah’s mother, Cameca Combs, at the end of their weekly tai chi class. Above: Pope, right, helps Caliah remove her shoes and support straps before class. Caliah, who suffers from cerebral palsy, takes tai chi lessons from Pope.



Caliah's right side is spastic. She is especially tight in her shoulder area. Pope supports Caliah's arm in order to release the tension in her arm muscles. Pope says, "My goal is for differently abled children to learn discipline, focus, and structure and have fun with martial arts training."



Caliah distracts easily. When she notices her mother, Cameca Combs, step out of the studio to take a phone call, Caliah runs to the door to get her attention.



Pope, left, teaches Caliah, right, a pose in I Liq Chuan, which translates to "mental-physical martial arts." The practice emphasizes developing internal power through mental attitude and awareness.

Pope moved to the Bay Area in 2003 to become Langan's dedicated bagua student. With Langan she learned other internal martial arts such as tai chi and bodywork.

Visiting martial arts masters also instructed Pope. After many teaching seminars, she became skilled enough to substitute for Langan when he was away.

Langan and Pope fell in love and after a seven-year engagement, finally got married.

Caliah is prone to distraction. After stretching out her back on the exercise ball with Pope's help, she gets bored and walks away.

Pope sighs and smiles. She tries reasoning with Caliah to return and continue her exercise. Caliah answers with a toothy grin but wants to do something else. She walks toward the exercise bag and pulls out spongy balls. Instantly, Pope suggests they roll a ball to each other while doing a seated wide-legged forward bend. Caliah agrees.

They sit facing each other with their legs stretched wide, rolling the ball back and

forth. The activity lasts for about a minute before Caliah gets up, bored again.

She runs away. She comes back. She picks up the ball and begins bouncing it against the wall.

Robert Fitch, an instructor from the Disabled Students Programs and Services (DSPS) at City College, is surprised by Caliah's mobility. He serves on the board at the Cerebral Palsy Center for the Bay Area, where he worked from 1983 to 1988.

Most of the Center's participants use wheelchairs. Their exercise programs include massage therapy, Feldenkrais, yoga and stretching, but largely focus on just getting people in and out of their wheelchairs.

Fitch describes most cases of cerebral palsy as the results of birth trauma, but adds that it can also occur in utero, before delivery.

"It's not the same as Down syndrome," Fitch says. "It's not an intellectual disability necessarily. It affects the motor system. People can be CP (cerebral palsy) and have a huge range of physical and mental ability."

In Caliah's case, she had hydrocephalus in utero. At 36 weeks it was discovered that cerebrospinal fluid was not draining away from her brain properly.

"She has a lot of spasticity in her body," says her mother, Cameca Combs. "But she grasps concepts and wants to participate."

Since working with Pope her posture has straightened up. She's become stronger and more centered.

Pope's path to teaching martial arts to children with disabilities began when one tai chi classmate changed the course of her career.

Victor Bashkeev, who studied alongside Pope, has cerebral palsy, but developed physical control over it by practicing tai chi.

"He went from hunched over, unbalanced and weak," Pope says, "to standing up straight and having such a precise touch. He could hit my body mass upon contact. I was intrigued."

CoachArt, an organization that offers free recreational classes to children with chronic illnesses, contacted Pope when her studio appeared on their Google search. They were looking for donations, partners and

"He went from hunched over, unbalanced and weak, to standing up straight and having such a precise touch."

— Holly Pope

volunteers. Inspired by her experience with Bashkeev, she wanted to help.

"I'll teach," she decided. "I want to teach kids with cerebral palsy."

Caliah became her first student.

Born with one leg longer than the other, the young girl was prone to falling down.

Her mother believed that some sort of sport would help her daughter so she signed her up for Pope's class.



Pope helps Caliah stand in a Harwin Balancer, a device with foot pedals that activate the small intrinsic muscles of coordination throughout the body.

The martial arts work has had a dramatic effect on her balance and gait.

"It takes a longer time for things to transmit in her brain," Combs says. "Holly teaches her to use the body she has.

"I think there's a misconception about martial arts. It doesn't always have to be about the kicking and punching." But the core training needed to do those movements is beneficial to children with special needs, she adds.

At the start of another practice session, Pope removes the braces from Caliah's legs and brings the punching mitts out.

"Punch the center!" instructs Pope.

She defends as Caliah works on punching and kicking the mitts.

Props like the exercise ball help Caliah with balance. She uses one to stretch out her back.

Pope taught Caliah a 21-step tai chi form from the I Liq Chuan system, a 20th-century Chinese martial art that emphasizes the development of internal power through mental attitude and awareness.

Pope has other students with health challenges. One has sickle cell anemia and another is severely developmentally delayed. Caliah assists Pope in teaching them. She shows them how to make a fist to hit the punching mitts.

"Her focus is much better. Even the doctors are surprised!"

— Holly Pope

The class pretends to be birds so they can learn form. They practice the White Crane form, which builds structure and looseness in their bodies. "You've got to make it fun," Pope says.

After working with Caliah for a year and a half, Pope says, "Her focus is much better. Even the doctors are surprised. She doesn't fall down as much as she used to."

Garrett Chinn, a teacher from City College's older adults department, agrees that tai chi helps with balance.

"Internationally, 35 to 40 percent of people over 65 experience a fall within one year," Chinn says. "My advanced groups are down to five percent."

He adds, "Some [of the students] who fell remembered in the heat of the moment to bend and relax. They had the presence of mind to do that. It blows me away."

Fitch has similar sentiments, "This kind of bodywork can improve posture and mobility, fight atrophy and help with balance."

Pope may have started a trend teaching mind and body connections to those who are differently abled.

In response to requests for health- and movement-focused classes from the San Francisco disability community, City College will be offering a class titled *Breath, Sound and Motion for Well-Being* in spring 2018.

"[City College] is unique in its response to community needs," says Muriel L. Parenteau, department chair of DSPS.

The class will introduce mind, body, breath and sound connections between the various modalities. It's designed for students with and without disabilities. It includes tai chi chih, which is similar to tai chi but without the martial arts aspect.

Pope hopes to reach out to more cerebral palsy organizations like Ability Now, one of the largest developmental assistance organizations in the Bay Area, to see if they would be interested in incorporating martial arts into their physical therapies.

She wants to write out a tai chi system for doctors, nurses and physical therapists who have patients with cerebral palsy. Pope hopes they will incorporate martial arts philosophies and principles into the therapies they already do.

"It's been so profound for Victor," Pope recalls of her friend with cerebral palsy. "He's got a Ph.D. There's nothing wrong with his brain. It's the disconnect between the signals. You want your leg to move and it doesn't do what you want it to do."

It's been profound for Caliah, too.

Class draws to an end. After reviewing pictures from the I Liq Chuan manual, Pope attempts one more kicking technique, but Caliah has had enough and begins to hug Pope playfully.

Pope notices drool around Caliah's mouth. By pressing her fingertips to pressure points on Caliah's cheek, chin and neck, she reduces the drooling and helps relax her face muscles. As Pope presses, Caliah begins to press the same points on Pope's face.

"One way I know she's learning and understanding is that she wants to do it on me," Pope says. "Then I know she's downloading the information. It's like, 'Yeah! You got it!'" ♦



Pope gives Caliah therapeutic bodywork on a weekly basis.



THE GIG LIFE

*City College student earns
a living doing what he loves*

Story and photos by Kathryn Hassler



Previous page: Sean Rynhard, center, DJs at Temple Nightclub twice a week to help support himself while attending City College.
Above: Temple Nightclub patrons mingle in a futuristic atmosphere created under Temple's floor-to-ceiling LED lights.

Bass reverberates through the walls outside the dance club. Inside, blinding lights, hot air and deafening music immediately cause sensory overload. Temple Nightclub is known for its floor-to-ceiling LED lights and killer sound system. There are low ceilings and mirrored walls. The sum total is futuristic.

In the corner under a giant mirror, Sean Rynhard, 23, focuses on his

not-quite-a-day-job, as he “spins” in San Francisco’s financial district.

At night he DJs at some of San Francisco’s hottest nightclubs, but when the sun rises he’s a skateboard-riding student at City College of San Francisco, finishing his associate degree in arts and humanities.

Around midnight, the energy at the club builds as the room fills with grooving bodies. Rynhard and Lucas Santos, his artistic partner, reach over and around each

other, performing an elaborate dance as they weave their beats, sending the room into an electronic frenzy, higher and higher.

Wait for it...

There’s the drop.

In the DJ booth, Rynhard has a blast. “I play anywhere from one-hour to four-hour sets,” he says. “When I play with a partner I can take a break during the long sets, but I try hard not to. The energy in the



room is so much better when you're in competition with your partner to see who lasts the longest."

Shannon McInerney and Jack Singer have been following Rynhard's music since 2012 and watch him play every week.

"I have seen Sean's musical evolution," McInerney says. "Singing, guitar, piano and now electronic music. He is a genius. It makes me happy to see him work on

something that makes other people go crazy and let loose."

She continues, "He is also having fun. I can see it in his eyes. Sean has a special kind of energy. I can't wait to see what he has in store in the years to come."

Singer adds, "We have gone to countless underground music-related events together, so it's really cool to see him on the other side of the decks. He's doing the things he has

always said he was going to do and I think that's super awesome."

Wearing jeans, T-shirt and a beanie, Rynhard has a neatly trimmed beard and comb-over fade that whips back and forth when he dances in the DJ booth.

He talks about how DJs Diplo, Billy Kenny and Seth Troxler have influenced his work.

"The music I produce evolved out of funk and disco," Rynhard explains. "There is a



City College student by day and DJ by night, Rynhard gets back and forth on his skateboard.

heavy emphasis on the beat and percussion. There's usually a four on the floor beat (a kick drum on every downbeat) but anything goes. I would say my sound is West Coast house."

The last song plays and the crowd clears the room. Rynhard and his partner pack up the equipment before getting paid.

Rynhard won't talk money. He says it's out of respect to his fellow artists. But he does mention a pretty broad range of pay from \$150 to \$2,000, depending on the event.

Each gig is negotiated through his manager Madison Fuller-Rutkowski. They have only been working together for a few months but Rynhard feels good about the relationship.

He used to work 30 hours a week as a waiter in a restaurant in addition to his schoolwork and music. It left him with no time for himself or his friends. He quit and now focuses on doing what he loves.

Rent in the city is steep. A room can cost anywhere from \$1,000 to \$3,000, and a one-bedroom apartment starts around \$1,900, according to Apartment List National Rent Report.

With San Francisco's minimum wage at \$13 an hour, the monthly take-home for a 40-hour work week is about \$1,300 after taxes. Even with tips (if one is fortunate enough to get them) it's still not enough to cover rent.

For a student, add in expenses such as tuition, fees, textbooks, supplies and transportation, and you're basically broke.

Rynhard grew up in San Francisco and can save money by living at home. But many City College students come from out-of-town, so living rent-free is a rare luxury. Instead, many students live with multiple roommates and work seven-hour shifts five to six days a week, leaving little to no time for school or hobbies.

Rynhard is living the dream. He pays his way by creating music. It doesn't feel like work at all.

"At the level I'm [DJing] I don't make a ton of money," Rynhard admits. "My parents support me with what I want to do in music and I cannot express more gratitude."

Born and raised in the Sunnyside district of San Francisco, near Ocean Campus, he



Rynhard plays tracks at Temple Nighclub that he produces at home. His initial foray into audio mixing was through a class at City College.



Rynhard and his DJ partner Lucas Santos take turns adding beats and sounds at Temple Nightclub. Their onstage chemistry is palpable to the audience.

He is living the dream. He pays his way by creating music. It doesn't feel like work at all.

discovered the local underground raves around the city at the age of 18. "I would go five nights a week and stay out till four in the morning to see every DJ that played that night. I love the atmosphere. I've always been into music."

He bought a laptop and signed up for Intro to Electronic Media at City College. The class is a cooperative effort between broadcast media services and the audiovisual department.

He spent years exploring different genres to find his own sound. "Originally, I wanted to make dubstep. I pretty much tried every genre before getting into house music."

He produces his mainstream electronica as a solo project he calls Hiroller. VITTA is the name of his house music duo with Santos.

Rynhard started working with Santos in late August 2016.

"Lucas had a few releases out and had been a DJ at Temple for a few years before we met," Rynhard says. "I had to fill in for him one night at Temple. The owner liked my sound so they asked me to come back."

As VITTA, they share headphones and take turns back and forth, adding sounds to each track.

"We've been working to evolve our sound into something unique," Rynhard says.

When he is not at Temple, you might also catch him at Taverna Aventine, a small bar across the street from the Transamerica Pyramid building.

"There's nothing more gratifying than sitting in your room and making a track during

the day," Rynhard says, "and then going out at night and playing that track at a club — watching people dance to something you just thought of that morning."

In his bedroom, which doubles as his production studio, he plays guitar and piano, and does vocals for his own tracks.

"I'm super proud of him," Fuller-Rutkowski says. "He is truly dedicated to music production. From creating his own vocals for a song he made, to his energy behind the DJ booth, he literally puts everything he has into his music."

Rynhard thinks he's figured out how to make it all work without the day job.

"I make about an eighth of what I used to make, but I'm a lot happier," Rynhard says.

With his City College degree in hand, he believes that focusing his attention on music will ultimately help him succeed.

"I want to DJ the rest of my life," Rynhard says, "but I also want to pursue other things like producing music for movies." ♦



Tom Graham walks past the Petaluma Public Library. He is well-known in the Bay Area for his "Walking Man" column which appeared regularly in the San Francisco Chronicle for eight years documenting his walks through San Francisco. In retirement, he walks the streets of Petaluma as he continues his legacy on a slightly smaller scale. (Sean Karlin/Etc Magazine)

Walking Graham



Etc Magazine bids
a mentor farewell

Story by Sean Karlin

Standing tall at the top of the long stairway leading to City College of San Francisco's iconic Science Building, Tom Graham, 69, looks west toward the Pacific Ocean. From this vantage point he can see Archbishop Riordan High School, the old reservoir turned parking lot and the massive cross crowning Mt. Davidson.

"I went to school right there," Tom says, pointing at Riordan high school across the street. "Every day we looked up and saw these words, 'The Truth Shall Make You Free' above the old City College building, and over there to the north we saw the cross on Mount Davidson."

When he graduated high school in 1966, Tom decided to walk across the street and enroll at City College where he studied journalism and became the Editor in Chief of the *Guardian* before transferring to San Jose State University.

Had he walked the other way he might have become Archbishop.

Accelerate 50 years, a rich career working as a feature writer and nearly three decades teaching journalism at City College, Tom Graham is finally retired.

Before we let him go, the editorial staff of this semester's *Etc Magazine* thought we would have one last chance to squeeze a bit more juice out of this ripe old journalist.

We sat him down for a chat at the Rosenberg Library on Ocean Campus. What follows are some excerpts from that conversation and a bit about Tom's life.

"In 1988 I came over here [to City College]," Tom recalls. "I thought I'll just go to the journalism department where I got my start and see if they need a guest speaker or someone to help out. That's where I met Juan [Gonzales]."

At the time, journalism department chair Juan Gonzales was single-handedly running the department and teaching all five journalism classes at City College. He was looking for the right person to help him. Tom, then 40, was the feature copy editor at the *San Francisco Chronicle* and seemed like a great fit.

"I wanted to expand the department," Juan Gonzales recalls. "The moment I got permission to hire another instructor I brought Tom on, but because Tom was still full time

"Same instructor, same textbook, same curriculum, same tests, same research. The students at City College paid \$36 for the course, and the students at University of San Francisco paid \$3,600 for the course."

— Tom Graham

at the *Chronicle*, I could only give him the evening courses. As soon as he left the *Chronicle*, I convinced him to take on a full load."

"Juan asked me what I could teach," Tom says. "News writing, feature writing, editing. Do you want a class in newspaper design? I could teach that. So I drew up some curriculum for a class in publication design."

Over 28 years Tom taught just about everything City College had to offer journalism students including: contemporary news media; magazine writing, editing and production; internet journalism; and even the fundamentals of public relations.

While he did go on to teach at other schools in the Bay Area, like College of Marin, Solano Community College and the University of San Francisco, he remained anchored to City College.

"City College is real," Tom states. "There's more diversity here. The students have more interesting life experience. I have much more loyalty to teaching here. I think that City College is a remarkable institution doing remarkable work."

Occasionally, students would tell him that if they went on to study at University of California, Berkeley after City College, they would be embarrassed to admit that they first went to a two-year college.

"Don't you ever be embarrassed about going to a two-year college — they are the greatest institutions in the world," Tom would tell them. "I taught at USF and I taught at City College. I taught the same course. Same instructor, same textbook, same curriculum, same tests, same research. The students at City College paid \$36 for the course and the students at USF paid \$3,600 for the course."



Graham checked off the streets of San Francisco as he walked them, filling maps with red marker when he did his "Walking Man" series for the *San Francisco Chronicle*. (Photo by Molly Oleson, courtesy of Tom Graham)

He winks. “You tell me who the smarter student is.”

Tom likes to walk. Every summer he heads up to the Sierras and spends weeks at a time trailblazing the Yosemite backcountry where he volunteers at Camp Mather ten weeks out of the year.

In October of 2002, Tom started walking the streets of San Francisco — every single one of them — for his “Walking Man” series in the San Francisco Chronicle.

“I was taking the ferry boat to work at the Chronicle each day,” Tom says. “From the ferry I would look at the skyline and think ‘I’ve been there’ or ‘I’ve never been there.’ Like I had never been to Alcatraz. I had never been to the top of Coit Tower.”

He adds, “I thought if I am going to walk to work from the ferry building, I’ll take a different route each day.”

Each day the trip became longer and longer.

“I’d never been up Kearny Street, so up Kearny I would go,” Tom says. “I’d hike around the Embarcadero to Fisherman’s Wharf and come back through Chinatown.”

When Tom got to work he would take out his red pen and map to mark the streets he had walked.

“I’d been doing that for a couple of months and the northeast quadrant of the map was getting really red.”

One morning a co-worker noticed him marking the map and asked if he was going to walk “every frickin’ street in the city?”

“I did not want to verbalize it because then you make a commitment,” Tom says. “It had crossed my mind, ‘Do I want to attempt this or not?’”

Tom recalls, “The editor of the ‘pink section’ came over and he was smiling. He also asked if I was walking every street. And I said ‘I guess I am.’ So he asked if I would write about it. I said I’d be interested in doing it, but it would not be a one-shot deal.

It would have to be a series. He agreed. And that was the genesis of the Walking Man column.”

For the next eight years Tom walked every street in San Francisco and wrote about it for the Chronicle.

In the series he quotes the author William Vitek who wrote, “Walking is the single best way to experience the here and now. It’s the best pace by which our senses can take in the world.”

“Every time I walked in the city,” Tom says, “I found something really exciting, something new, something that really piqued my curiosity — or my creativity.”

“I’d be crossing the street and see another cistern, and I’d wonder how many frickin’ cisterns are there in the city? So I’d go and research that.”

A cistern is a rainwater collection basin. You recognize them as a large circle of bricks in the middle of the street with a manhole right in the center. There are 170 cisterns in



Graham, 69, takes a look around the campus where he himself studied journalism back in 1965. He retired this year from City College after 23 years as a journalism instructor. Graham, together with his students, produced over 25 issues of Etc Magazine. (Sean Karlin/Etc Magazine)



Graham cuts through American Alley connecting Western Avenue and Washington Street in downtown Petaluma. (Sean Karlin/Etc Magazine)

San Francisco. Most were built in 1908, following the great earthquake and subsequent fires that destroyed much of the city. The 11 million gallons of water stored in these underground tanks helped save portions of the city, and the fire department still uses them.

Tom eventually walked 2,612 streets, which he calculated to be around 1,200 miles.

“It was therapy,” Tom says. “I learned a great deal about myself, about my family, about my city, about the landscape, the geography and geology, about the natural and cultural history. I thought I knew my city well. I didn’t know anything.”

He came to understand the city as a mosaic, each piece contributing to the whole.

“You can’t pick one thing out, like homelessness or crime,” Tom says. “Part of the reason it’s so amazing is that all these influences are playing into it. It makes you less judgmental.”

Tom completed his walk on March 13, 2010 — which also happened to be his 62nd birthday — by trying to cross the San Francisco Golf Club on Thomas More Way.

“The security guard stopped me,” Tom recalls. “He told me that it was a private golf course and that you couldn’t walk on it, and they don’t allow Levi’s. Of course I wear Levi’s. So I waited for him to disappear and walked behind a hedge so no one could see.”

Tom became advisor to Etc Magazine in the fall of 2003 when a group of

journalism students devised the idea for a feature writing magazine and published the first issue. He was impressed not only with their moxie, but also with their talent.

With Tom’s guidance, Etc has grown into a staple of the City College journalism program. He brags that since its creation Etc wins about half a dozen awards every issue for writing, photography and design, and the Journalism Association of Community Colleges’ general excellence award every year. He is like a proud parent.

“People don’t know how hard it is to put out a magazine every semester,” Juan Gonzales says. “Tom made it happen for over a decade, and it has all been worth it with awards every year for excellence in writing and photography. I take my hat off to Tom.”

“The magazine gives a slice of life,” Tom says. “It shows where people are coming from, the different points of view and diversity. [Etc Magazine] highlights the accomplishments of our students, our alumni, our faculty and our staff to show what a great institution this is. It’s a showcase.”

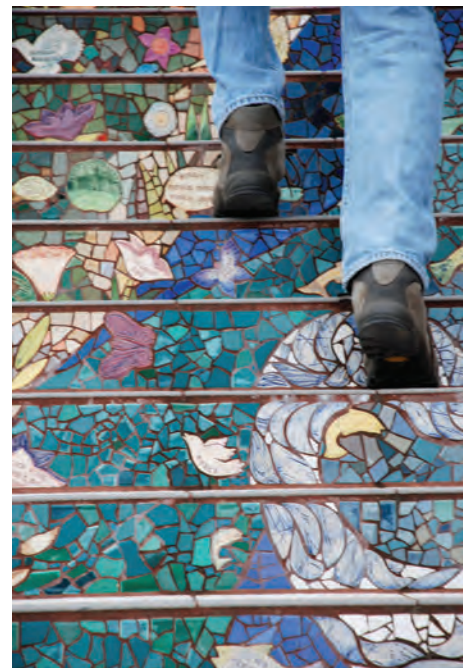
“I would like to pride myself in thinking I would recognize every student I taught,” Tom beams.

Today, Molly Oleson is an award winning journalist, multimedia artist and the current editor for the Pacific Sun, which is the country’s second-oldest alternative weekly newspaper, but in 2010 she was one of Tom’s students.

Tom eventually walked 2,612 streets, which he calculated to be around 1,200 miles.

“Tom was passionate about journalism,” Molly says. “He loved it and instilled that love in all his students. After working with him on the magazine I decided to go to grad school at UC Berkeley.”

Molly sits at one end of the spectrum, along with the many students that have achieved successful careers going on to become writers and editors at publications like the Los Angeles Times, The New York Times and The Washington Post.



Graham climbs the tiled steps at the corner of 16th Avenue and Moraga Street in San Francisco. (Photo by Molly Oleson, courtesy of Tom Graham)



Graham plots his course for walking the streets of Petaluma from his home office. (Sean Karlin/Etc Magazine)

There are other student success stories, Tom says. “Some students simply made major breakthroughs — lifetime breakthroughs. [Their stories] revealed things that were very personal.”

One of his students, Candace Hansen, wrote in the Spring 2010 issue about her own son Julian, who ran away from home, never to be seen again.

“The pain that she had to revisit in order to write that story,” Tom says, choking up, “it makes me cry to this day. She knocked [her story] so far out of the ballpark. The story ended up being the cover story on the

magazine — she had never had anything published before.”

Soldiers returning from war, ex-cons trying to re-enter society, black, white, Latino, women, men, transgender, Tom witnessed a parade of people from all walks of life and was amazed by the narratives they told.

“I am kind of reliving the first time I got a story published through my students,” Tom says. “Maybe the stories weren’t written as well, or they weren’t as polished or didn’t show as much skill, but there were major breakthroughs for those students and they got them published.”

Now that Tom is retired, he can finally take it easy. These days you can find him walking the streets of Petaluma. He still carries an old map in his back pocket so he can mark the streets he’s travelled in red ink.

“I’ve lived here for 13 years,” Tom says. “I still don’t know very much about Petaluma. I haven’t even been inside the Petaluma museum.”

And if you don’t see him trekking the streets he’s probably bushwhacking in the eastern Sierras. One man’s retirement is another man’s full time job.

No story about a veteran journalist putting down his notepad can be complete without a few words about the future of news.

“I think we need to get away from this ideological approach toward everything,” Tom says. “When you have any media organization that is coming at things from an ideological point of view you’ve got problems. We need to start thinking more independently on an issue by issue basis.

“I think the bottom line is, like the statement on the science building says, ‘The Truth Shall Make You Free.’”

Tom concludes, “We must get at the truth and speak truth to power. That’s what our job is.” ♦



Left: Graham looks out over the Petaluma River during one of his walks. (Sean Karlin/Etc Magazine) Right: With a map in his back pocket, Graham takes in the view from the Grandview Park overlook at the top of the tiled steps in San Francisco. (Photo by Molly Oleson, courtesy of Tom Graham)





Fall 2017 Journalism Classes

Classes start August 21, 2017. To register for courses go to www.ccsf.edu/schedule/spring/journalism

For more information call (415) 239-3446.

Jour 19: Contemporary News Media

76160 001 Lec. M W F 09:10 – 10:00 a.m. Health Center 203

3.0 units

Gonzales

Introduction to modern mass communication, with an emphasis on development of news media, analysis of the credibility of the media and its impact on daily life. *CSU/UC*

Jour 21: News Writing and Reporting

76162 001 Lec. M W F 10:10 – 11:00 a.m. Health Center 203

3.0 units

Gonzales

Techniques of newspaper reporting, developing and writing a news story, training in information gathering and interviewing sources.

PREREQ.: ENGL 93 or 94 or placement in ENGL 96. CSU

Jour 22: Feature Writing

72111 551 Lec. T 6:30 – 9:20 p.m. Mission Campus/Rm. 217

3.0 units

Rochmis

Fundamentals in feature writing for magazines and newspapers with special emphasis on profile and interpretive news features. Practical experience in interview and in-depth research techniques. Training in how to write a freelance story for publication. *PREREQ.: ENGL 93 or 94 or PLACEMENT IN ENGL 96. CSU*

Jour 23: Electronic Copy Editing

77048 351 Lec. R 6:30 – 9:20 p.m. Mission Campus/Rm. 218

3.0 units

Rochmis

This course is for writers, working editors, and those considering a career in editing or copyediting. Students learn to edit newspapers, magazines and web site articles for accuracy, style and organization. The writer-editor relationship, and ways to keep it healthy, is emphasized throughout the course. *ADVISE: JOUR 21. CSU*

Jour 24: Newspaper Laboratory

76882 001 Lec. M W F 12:10 – 1:00 p.m. BNGL 615

3.0 units

Gonzales

Beginning Newspaper laboratory course focused on the publication of the Guardsman. Provides a practical understanding of the various elements involved in producing a newspaper. *COREQ: JOUR 21. CSU*

Jour 26: Fundamentals of Public Relations

74606 001 Lec. TR 11:10 - 12:25 p.m. MUB 160

3.0 units

Gonzales

Prepares students to create a public relations campaign which includes writing media releases, “pitch” letters, public service announcements, managing media outlets, coordinating mailings and designing leaflets and posters, as well as setting up news conferences. Special attention given to in-house public relations duties for corporate and non-profit entities. *ADVISE: JOUR 24, and VMD 105. CSU*

Jour 29: Magazine Editing & Production

75930 551 L/L M 6:30 – 8:20 p.m. Mission Campus/Rm. 217

3.0 units

Lifland/Gonzales

Students will study the editorial, business, graphic, and production skills required for publishing Etc., the campus magazine. Course is appropriate for students interested in creative writing, editing, photography, graphic arts, business, and journalism. *PREREQ: JOUR 22, ADVISE JOUR 21. CSU*

Jour 31: Internship Experience

72312 001 Exp HOURS ARR BNGL 615

2.0 units

Gonzales

Supervised on-campus or off-campus employment in a branch of journalism or a closely allied field. *ADVISE: JOUR 24, Repeat: Maximum credit: 4 units.*

Jour 36: Advanced Reporting

77641 501 Lec. W 6:30 – 9:20 p.m. MUB 170

3.0 units

Gonzales

Advanced concepts of news gathering, interviewing and writing. Students will be assigned beats covering neighborhood communities and local government. Extensive research, interviewing, meeting coverage and writing involved. Students will improve and expand their news gathering and writing skills. *ADVISE: JOUR 21 CSU*

Jour 37: Intro to Photojournalism

76939 501 Lec. W 6:30 - 9:20 p.m. Mission Campus/Rm. 217

3.0 units

Lifland

Emphasizes concepts of photojournalism such as news and feature photography. Assignments will involve photographing people and visual storytelling at a level appropriate for publication such as in campus publications. Access to Single Lens Reflex (SLR) digital or film camera required. *ADVISE: PHOT 51 or demonstration of equivalent knowledge. CSU*

Jour 38: Intermediate Photojournalism

77642 551 Lec. R 6:30 - 9:20 p.m. Mission Campus/Rm. 217

3.0 units

Lifland

Emphasizes concepts of photojournalism at an intermediate level. Assignments will involve photographing people and visual storytelling at a professional entry-level appropriate for use in publications such as newspapers and magazines. Emphasizes integration of traditional photojournalism with new media technology. Digital SLR required. *Prereq.: Jour 37 or demonstration of equivalent knowledge. CSU*

Attention all
Writers, Editors,
Illustrators, Designers,
and Photographers...

BREAK OUT **FROM THE PACK**



JOURNALISM 29
Magazine Editing and Production

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Monday 6:30–8:20 pm
Spring and Fall Semesters
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